

1.16.03

**CALL YOUR SENATORS IMMEDIATELY
AND URGE THEM TO OPPOSE A 1.6% ACROSS-THE-BOARD
SPENDING CUT THAT INCLUDES
OLDER AMERICANS ACT PROGRAMS**

Debate began today on the Senate floor on a \$386 billion omnibus Fiscal Year 2003 (FY03) appropriations bill containing funding allowances for all domestic non-defense Cabinet departments and agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30. In order to stay within the President's proposed spending limits, and offset \$6.1 billion in new initiatives, the measure contains a 1.6% across-the-board reduction in funding (from FY02 levels) for almost all federal agencies.

In addition to the OAA, this cut would affect such programs as the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), Section 202 Senior Housing, and the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The measure (H Res 2) also reflects more than \$9 billion in cuts from the 11 spending measures passed unanimously last year by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The Democrats intend to offer numerous amendments, which could keep the Senate in session into the weekend. At this point, amendments are expected that would increase funding for homeland security, education, and LIHEAP.

**TELL YOUR SENATORS TO OPPOSE AN ACROSS-THE-BOARD CUT AND
EXPLAIN THE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON CONSUMERS AND FAMILIES –
PARTICULARLY ON TOP OF STATE CUTS TO HUMAN SERVICES.**

The President and GOP leadership in both chambers hope to have completed action on FY03 spending bills by the State of the Union address on January 28. In order to meet this tight deadline Senate appropriators agreed to bypass committee action on the omnibus bill and take the measure directly to the floor.

Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) who took over chairmanship of the Senate Appropriations Committee for the 108th Congress introduced the measure late yesterday. Drafted in private over the last several days by key Senate Republicans, substantial changes were made to the measure only hours before it was introduced. Last-minute additions included funding for three additional initiatives: \$1.5 billion for election overhaul provisions that passed last year, an additional \$3.1 billion for drought relief to farmers, and \$1.53 billion for Medicare payment adjustments.

For updated contact information on your Senators, go to www.senate.gov.